

Constant in his hatred of deliberative assemblies, which he had often termed collections of babblers, ideologists, and phrasemongers, Napoleon, on his return to Paris, suppressed the Tribune, which had been an annoyance to him ever since the first day of his elevation. The Emperor, who was skilful above all men in speculating on the favorable disposition of public opinion, availed himself at this conjuncture of the enthusiasm produced by his interview on the Niemen. He therefore discarded from the fundamental institutions of the government that which still retained the shadow of a popular character. But it was necessary that he should possess a Senate merely to vote men; a mute Legislative Body to vote money; that there should be no opposition in the one and no criticism in the other; no control over him of any description; the power of arbitrarily doing whatever he pleased; an enslaved press; — this was what Napoleon wished, and this he obtained. But the month of March, 1814, resolved the question of absolute power!

In the midst of these great affairs, and while Napoleon was dreaming of universal monarchy, I beheld in a less extensive sphere the inevitable consequences of the ambition of a single man. Pillage and robbery were carried on in all parts over which my diplomatic jurisdiction extended. Rapine seemed to be legally authorized, and was perpetrated with such fury, and at the same time with such ignorance, that the agents were frequently unacquainted with the value of the articles which they seized. Thus, for example, the Emperor ordered the seizure at Hamburg, Bremen, and Liibeck of all English merchandise, whatever might be its nature or origin. The Prince of Neufchfitel (Berthier) wrote to me from the Emperor that I must procure 10,000,000 francs from the Hanse Towns, M. Daru, the Tntendant-General, whose business it was to collect this sort of levy, which Napoleon had learned to make in Egypt, wrote to urge me to obtain a prompt and favorable decision. The unfortunate towns which I was thus enjoined to oppress had already suffered sufficiently. I had obtained, by means of negotiation, more than was demanded for the ransom of the English merchandise, which had been, seized